

Keeping Your Home Safe When You Are on Vacation

7 Tips to Know



During the summer months many of our residents travel for leisure and take vacations to see family. With the recent spike in burglaries and thefts in our area, the Village of Volente would like to offer the following tips to help keep your home safe from intruders while you are away.

1. Ask a Friend or Neighbor to Help

The best line of defense against intruders in your home is a trusted neighbor or friend keeping an eye on your place in your absence. A once a day drive by, bringing the mail in, feeding the cat, all show activity at the house and ward off those who might be casing the property.

2. Don't Tip Off Criminals on the Web

In a world where everyone's latest meal and selfie is posted on social media sites, it's no wonder that criminals are using the web as a tool to find houses to burglarize. Posting on Facebook that you are headed out of town may seem innocuous enough, but you just may be letting a burglar know that you won't be home for the next week. Be careful what you say on answering machines and voicemails too -- callers don't need to know you're on a vacation, just that you're unable to answer.

3. DO Tip Off the Police

Consider notifying the Travis County Sheriff's Office, or the Village of Volente offices, if you are going on vacation for longer than a week. It is possible that a patrol car or the Village staff may take a quick look to ensure your house is untouched. If you have a security alarm, leave a key and the code with someone you trust like a neighbor, in case they need to let the Police in.

4. Curtains Closed, Open, or Just the Same?

Burglars often "case" a house or monitor the comings and goings of people for weeks before actually committing the crime. Don't tip off burglars to a change in your habits by changing the way your curtains are normally situated. Closed curtains, while possibly preventing someone from peering in your house, may also prevent neighbors and the police from being able to look in and ensure everything is okay. Move expensive items, like jewelry or computers out of plain sight from the window, but leave the curtains as you normally do.

5. Let there be light?

Don't leave your lights on at home throughout your entire vacation in an effort to make it look like someone is in the house. Instead of acting as a deterrent, this practice ends up costing you a pretty penny on your electric bill. Plus, house lights blazing throughout the night might look a bit odd. Instead, purchase a light switch timer that can turn your lights on and off automatically according to a programmed schedule. Criminals keeping an eye on your house will notice lights flipping on and off, and will probably assume someone is doing the flipping. You can find these programmable devices at almost any hardware store or online.

6. Stop your Mail

If you are going on an extended vacation either place a “stop” on your mail and newspapers through the Post Office or ask a neighbor to empty your mailbox for you. Otherwise, a week's worth of mail in your mailbox and a pile of papers in your driveway could signal to criminals that you are out of town. If you would like to place a mail hold, visit [USPS.com](https://usps.com)

7. Remove Your Spare Key

That plastic rock isn't fooling anyone – If a criminal figures out that you are away on vacation, it's likely that he or she will check your porch for a spare key. So reach under the mat, above the door frame, or into the flower pot and remove your spare key before you leave for vacation.

If you see any suspicious activity at your property or a neighbor's property call 911 immediately!

This article is brought to you by the Public Safety Committee of the Village of Volente. For more information contact:

**Council Member Babs Yarbrough
Chair of the Public Safety Committee
council.member4@volentetexas.gov**